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Voluntary - Public

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**GAIN Report Number:** MX2055

## Mexico

**Post:** Mexico

### Biotech Corn Faces More Hurdles in Mexico

**Report Categories:**

Biotechnology - GE Plants and Animals

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**Report Highlights:**

On July 20, 2012, the Government of Mexico (GOM) published a controversial new draft agreement (with maps) to determine the “Centers of Origin and Centers of Genetic Diversity of Corn” in Mexico, which focuses solely on seven states in northern Mexico. Comments regarding the new draft agreement must be sent to the Federal Regulatory Improvement Commission (COFEMER) by August 3, 2012. Should this draft agreement be adopted as is, it would be seen as a decisive policy outcome to essentially not utilize biotechnology for Mexico’s most important crop.

**General Information:**

**Disclaimer:** This summary is based on a *cursory* review of the subject announcement and therefore should not, under any circumstances, be viewed as a definitive reading of the resolution in question, or of its implications for U.S. agricultural export trade interests. In the event of a discrepancy or discrepancies between this summary and the complete resolution or announcement as published in Spanish, the latter shall prevail.

**Title of Notice:** Agreement to Determine the Centers of Origin and Centers of Genetic Diversity of Corn in Mexico.

**Type of Resolution:** Final Assessment.

**Publication Date:** July 20, 2012

**Products Affected:** Corn

**Agency in Charge:** Federal Regulatory Improvement Commission (COFEMER)

Note: COFEMER is an autonomous, technical, and administrative body of the Economy Secretariat (SE) charged with ensuring transparency in the drafting of federal regulations and for promoting the development of cost effective regulations that produce the greatest net benefit. End Note.

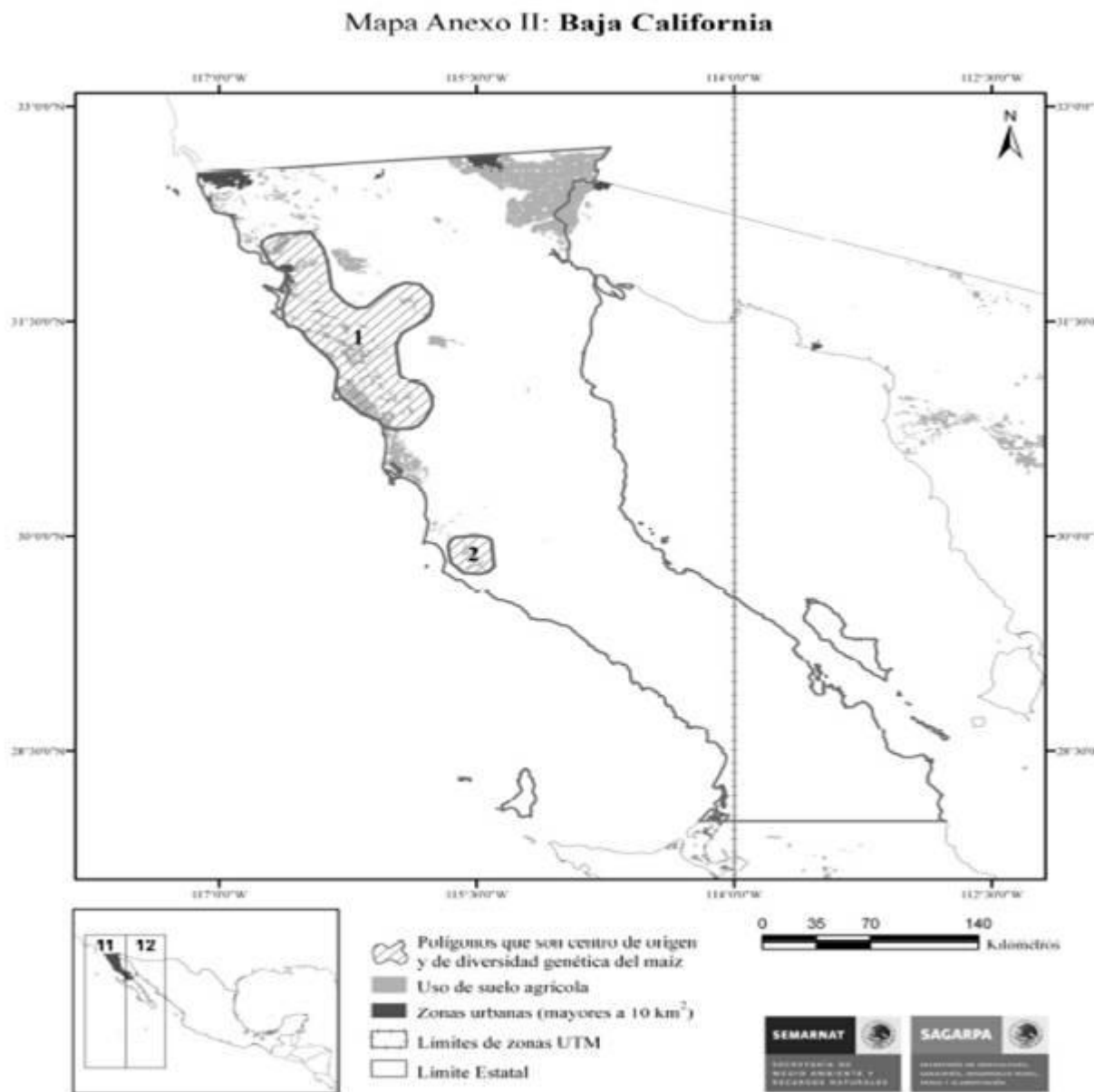
**Background**

On July 20, 2012, the Government of Mexico (GOM) published a new draft agreement (with map) to determine the “Centers of Origin and Centers of Genetic Diversity of Corn” in Mexico, which, up until now, focuses solely on seven states in northern Mexico. This new version apparently substitutes the draft agreement published on December 13, 2011, (see GAIN MX1100 *Mapping Mexican Corn and Implications for Biotech Development*). This agreement is part of the legal process required by Mexico’s Biosafety Law (see Provision 86 of the 2008 GAIN report [MX8048 Mexico Biotechnology Annual](#)) which requires specific guidelines for protecting native corn species and a map delineating the centers of origin and centers of corn genetic diversity in all Mexico. According to Provision 86 of the Biosafety Law, the centers of origin and genetic diversity of corn in Mexico as well as the geographic areas in which the related species in question are found shall be determined jointly by a resolution issued by the Secretariat of Environment and Natural Resources (SEMARNAT) and the Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Rural Development, Fishery and Food (SAGARPA).

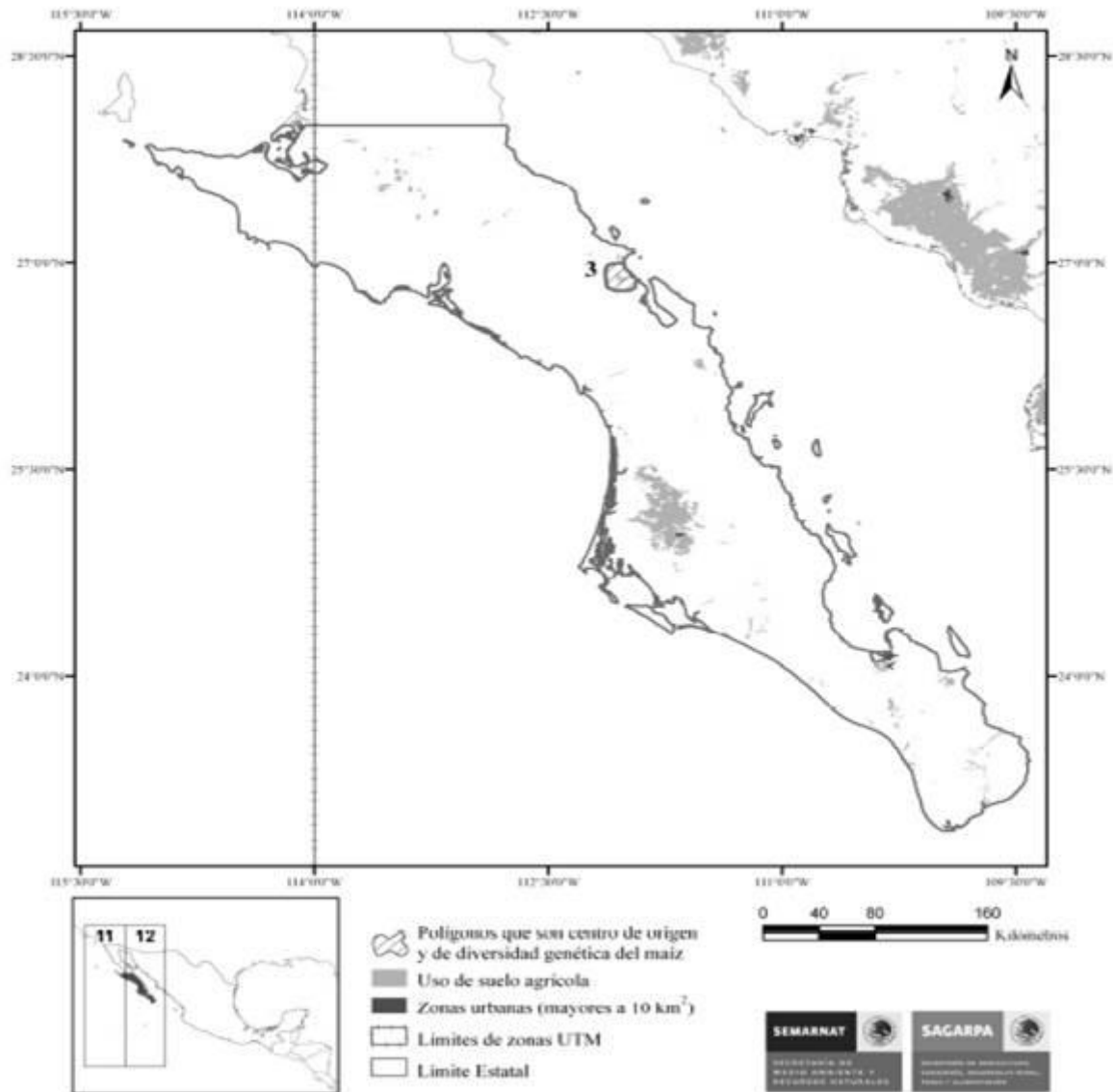
This new draft is generating great controversy between numerous government officials, industry representatives, and academics as GM corn production would be prohibited in areas previously approved and released under the experimental and pilot phases in the states of Chihuahua and Sinaloa. The focus on only seven states also raises questions regarding the status of the rest of the country. Comments to the new draft agreement must be sent to the Federal Regulatory Improvement Commission (COFEMER) by August 3, 2012, the minimum time allowable. After the comments have been received, the GOM will eventually publish the final result in Mexico’s Federal Register (*Diario Oficial*). Should this draft agreement be adopted as is, without inclusion of the territory not delineated in the maps, it would be seen by many as a decisive policy outcome to not utilize biotechnology for Mexico’s most important crop.

## DRAFT MAPS

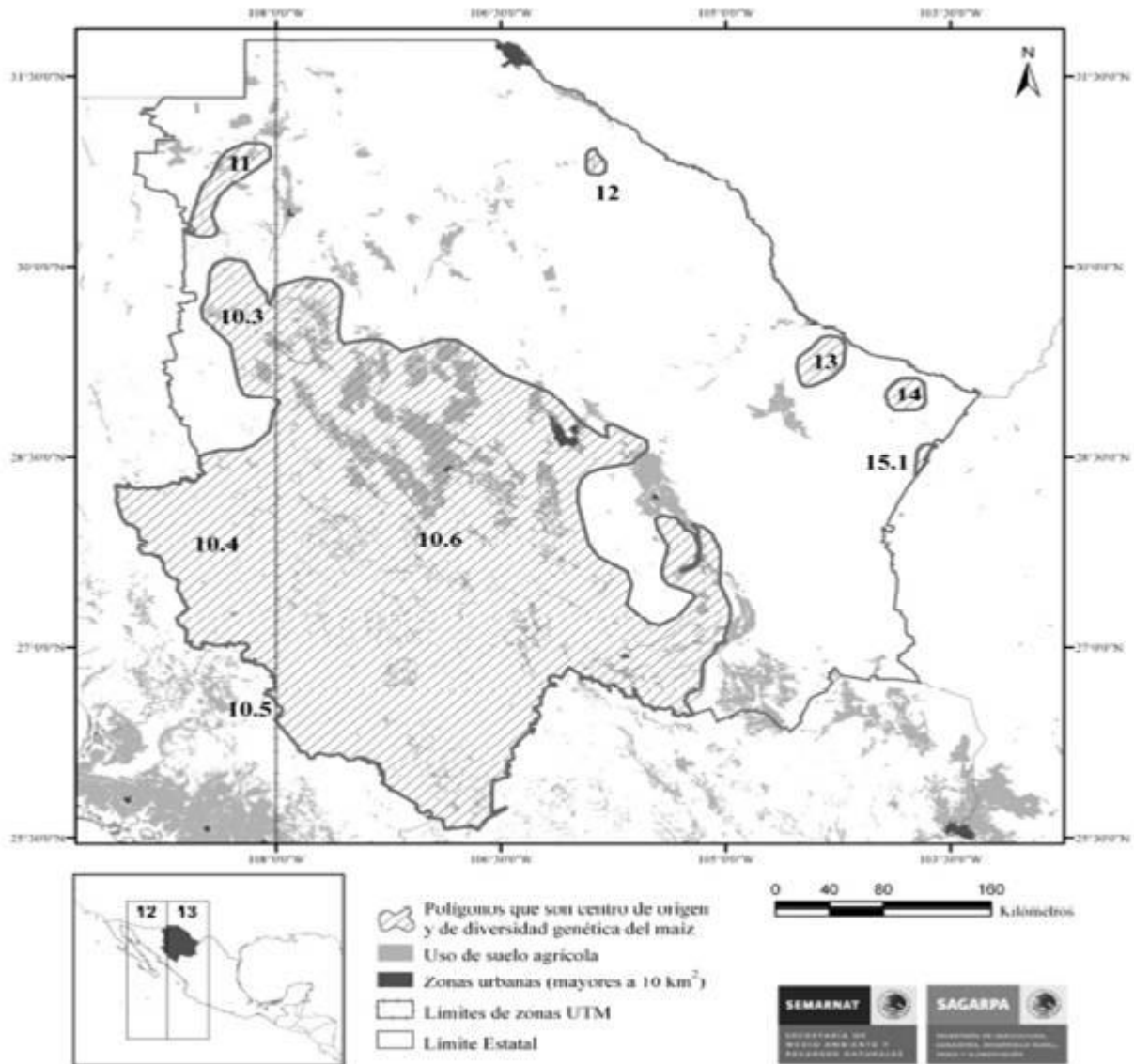
As can be seen in the following images, the shaded areas in each state are considered as centers of origin of corn (and related species as *Tripsacum*) and genetic diversity and covers a significant portion of arable land dedicated to agriculture. The only areas where GM corn planting would be permitted are in many instances non-arable desert areas of each of these northern states of Mexico.



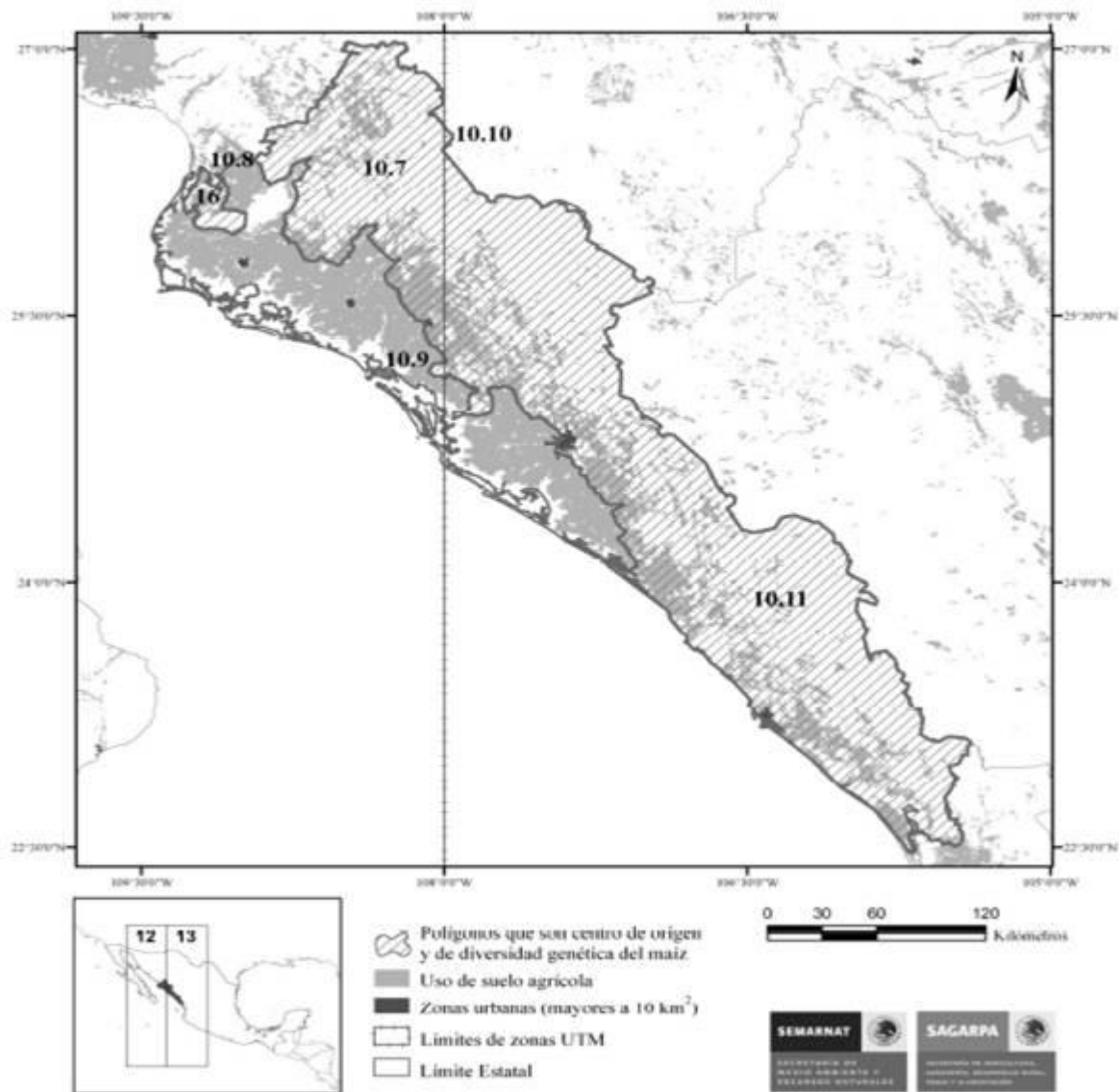
## Mapa Anexo II: Baja California Sur



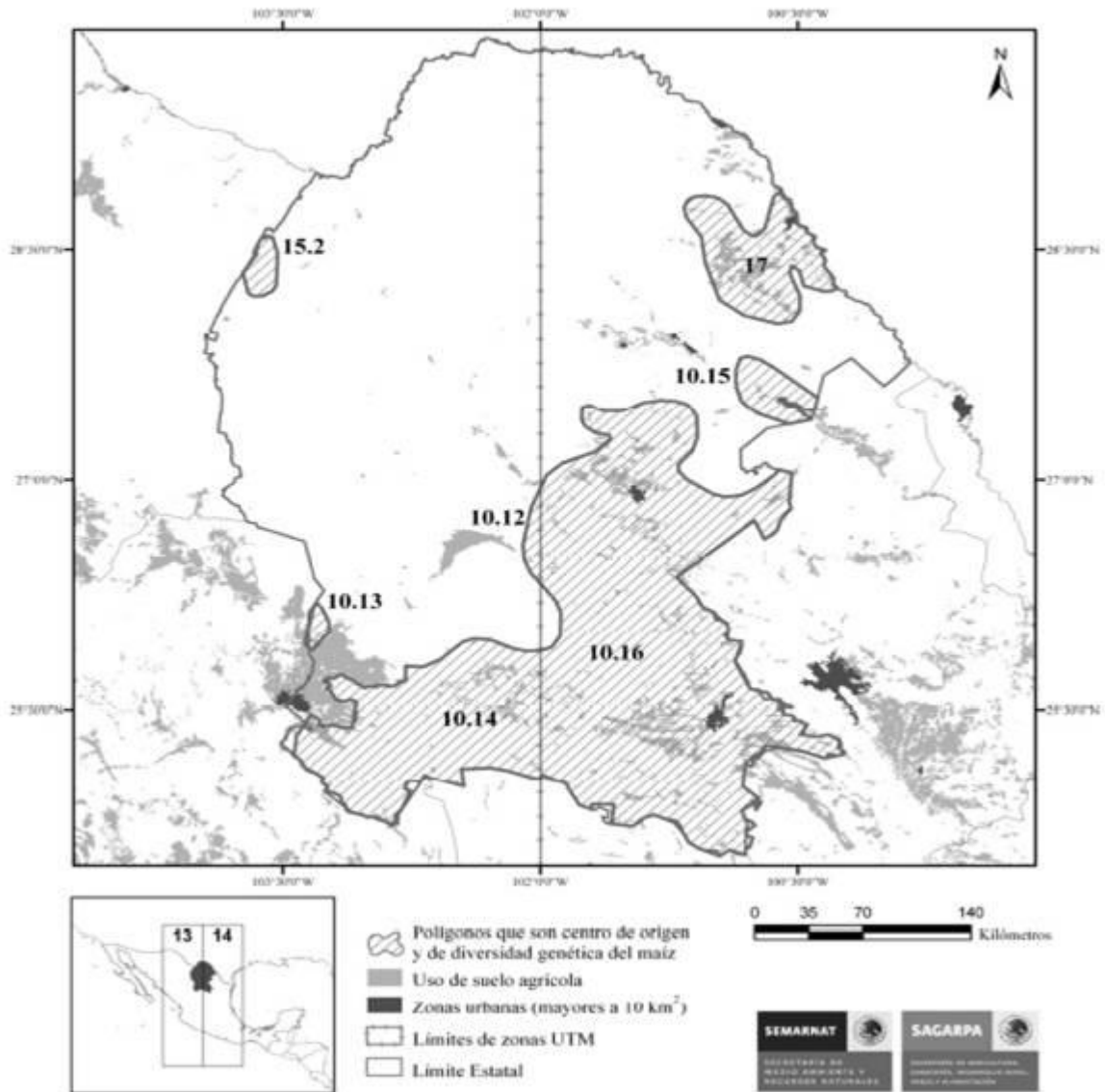
## Mapa Anexo II: Chihuahua



## Mapa Anexo II: Sinaloa

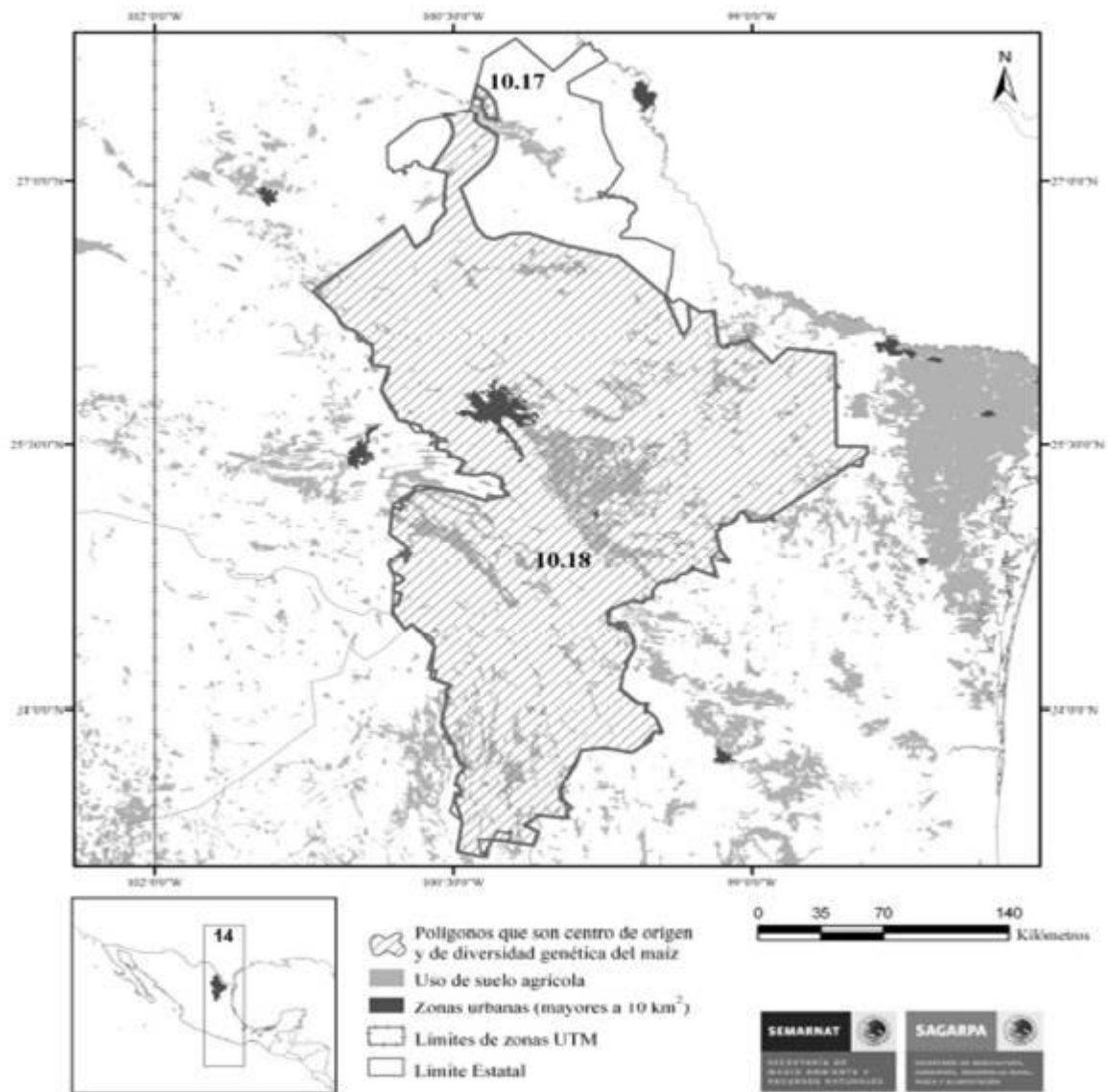


Mapa Anexo II: Coahuila de Zaragoza



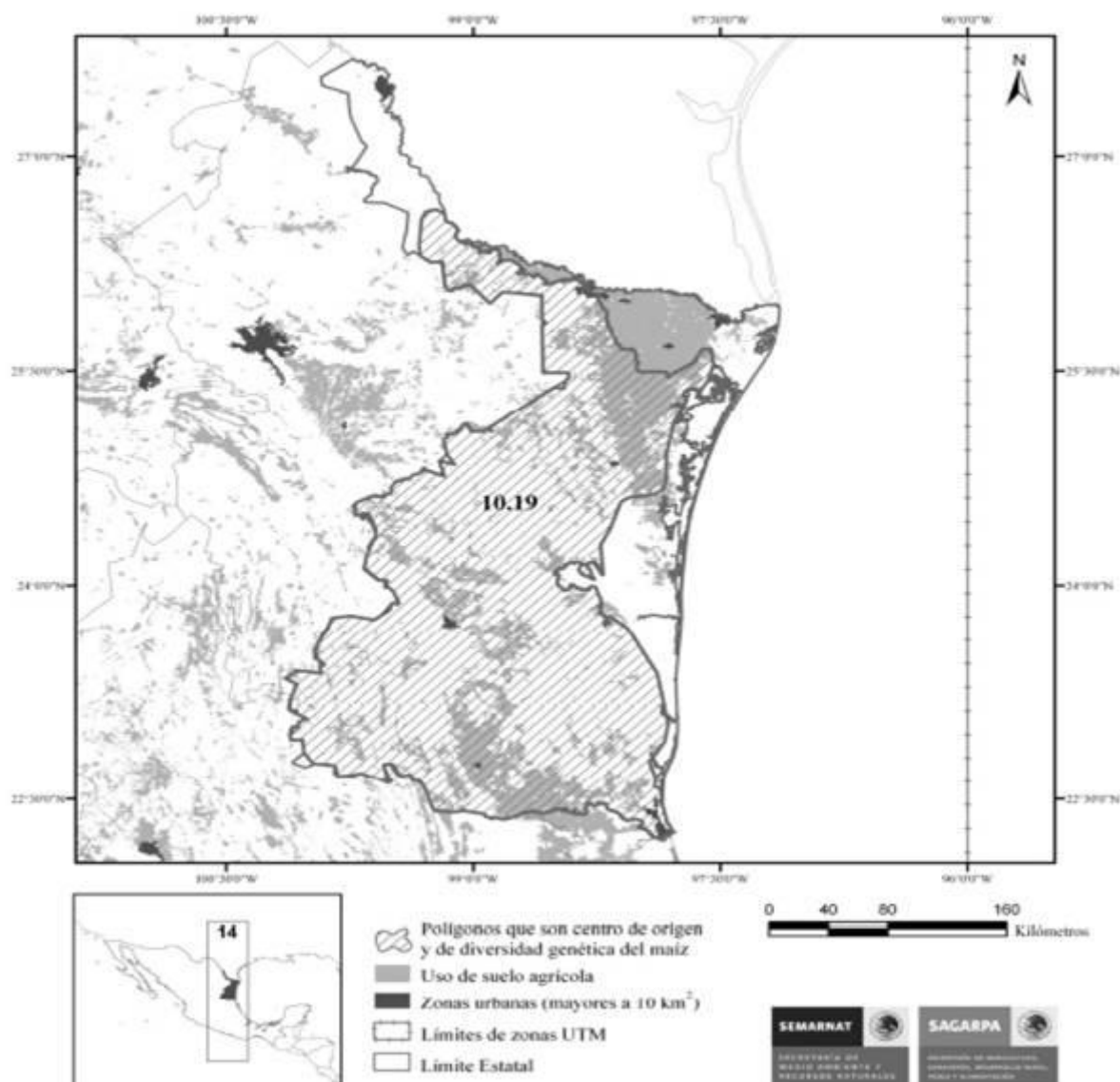


## Mapa Anexo II: Nuevo León





Mapa Anexo II: Tamaulipas



## COMMENT

Biotech developers in Mexico have been fearing a development along the lines of what seems to be happening. Through their trade association and individually, biotech companies in Mexico have requested meetings with GOM officials to better understand the rationale for pushing such an apparently restrictive draft agreement for GM corn. Some speculate that the current administration is pushing this new draft agreement in order to have something formally in place before the Revolutionary Institutional Party (PRI) in alliance with the Green Party (PV) takes over at the end of this year.